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THE JOY OF EASTER.

But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order.

The most joyful feast in the Christian calendar is that of Easter. The joy that filled the first disciples when first the glad tidings passed from lip to lip, "The Lord is risen indeed," has been the Church's perpetual joy. One generation of believers has uttered it to another, and to-day the glad sound is repeated all around the earth.

We can well understand why the Christian should rejoice. This glad news is life and immortality to him. It is the announcement of present peace with God, of a present Christ who has become our Life, by whom we overcome the world and sin and death. It is the foretaste and the pledge of an exceeding joy with which we shall be made glad when His glory is revealed.

But there has always been a feeling that the joy of this event is so great that all mankind has some share in it. The church, as God's chosen vessel, is first filled with it. But something of the gladness overflows, reaching and blessing the whole human race. This is implied in the passage above quoted from 1st Cor. xv.

20-23. The relations of the Christ to *man*, to the human race, are brought to view, as well as that special relation he sustains to "those that are Christ's," and who are the first fruits of His triumph and the special sharers in His joy. This relation to humanity, similar to that borne by the first man, by whom death came upon all, is equally taught and emphasized in Rom. v: 12-21. A narrow exegesis has sought to limit the blessing of "justification to life" there referred to, to the elect, in obedience to the necessities of a theological system. But it cannot be so cramped. The "much more," the super-abounding grace, of the passage puts to shame all such attempts. Moreover like a vein of gold, hidden beneath the surface rocks, there lies imbedded in the Old Testament the promise of a ransom from death of all mankind. A false interpretation of the New Testament teaching concerning the Messiah's work of rule and judgment has converted this promise, as it relates to a large proportion of the race, into a doom of unspeakable horror and despair. But still in such passages as we have already referred to, in the first sermons of the apostles, and especially in St. Paul's apologies before the Jewish council (Acts xxiii: 6,) before Felix (xxiv: 15,) and Agrippa (xxvi: 6, 7, 23,) this hope stands out luminous. It is defined as a "hope toward God that there shall be a resurrection both of the just and of the unjust." And therefore there is good reason for even the blind unintelligent happiness which finds its way into the hearts of unbelieving men when they hear the glad tidings "The Lord is risen."

We have been careful to explain that those who do

not now confess and submit to Him incur immense loss. They judge themselves unworthy of everlasting life. They receive no present salvation from the wages of sin which are death. They must, therefore, sink down into its dark and bitter bondage. Their recovery to life and heritage in this system of God's works, over which He made man the lord, must be long postponed. And when resurrection reaches them it is not to eternal life, which is the only Life that can abide as sovereign in this system. It does not free sinful men from condemnation. It will, to the persistently disobedient, be only a prelude to the second death. All this presents to men the strongest motives why they should now submit to the risen Lord. No life and immortality, no deliverance from sin and its necessary torment, no good of being can ever possibly come to them in any other way. But still, with all this postponement and loss of blessing, and all the hazards of the future, we cannot conceal the fact that the resurrection of Christ is in fulfillment of the promise long ago made that in the Christ should all the families of the earth be blessed, and that these glad tidings of great joy, which are unto all people, shall yet be heard through all the regions of the dead, each one of whom in his own time and order "shall be made alive." If we cannot adjust this great promise to a fitting place in our theological system, then the worse for the system. It is in the word of God. The joy of it is in all Christian hearts, however smothered. The hope of it puts a new value upon humanity and opens up new possibilities. The light of it illumines our Father's face with a new glory and sheds into our hearts an inexpressible peace.

Would that the Church and all mankind might come to a better knowledge of this glory! Thank God, such Easter joy shall yet break through "the face of the covering which is cast over all people and the vail which is spread over all nations. And it shall be said in that day, Lo! this is our God, we have waited for Him, and He will save us; we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation." And then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, "He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of His people shall He take away from off all the earth: for the Lord hath spoken it." (Isa. xxv: 6-9.)

Such is "the feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined," which our God has made *unto all people* in that holy mountain upon which He has forever raised from the dead our Conquering, our Exalted Lord. To WHOM BE GLORY IN THE CHURCH THROUGHOUT ALL AGES, WORLD WITHOUT END.

BAPTIZED FOR THE DEAD—The varying interpretations of this expression illustrate the confusion of thought into which we fall when we seek to evade the plain teaching of a passage, because it does not fit in to our pre-conceived theories. The meaning of the Greek words is "baptized *in behalf of* the dead." They refer to that priestly position into which Christians of the type of Paul are brought. As baptized into Christ's sufferings and death, they are called to take part with Him in those future administrations, of which this chapter speaks, which are for the benefit of the dead, and which shall not end until all the dead are brought back to life,

STUDIES IN THE BIBLE.

JUDGMENT IN PSALM AND PROPHECY.

Most important principles of God's dealings, of the relations of Israel and of mankind to His government, and of the destiny of man and of the created system to which he belongs, have now been brought to view. The Song of Moses has declared to us God's righteousness and the far-reaching judgments required for its vindication. The human race at large must pass under the power of death. The chosen people must suffer all kinds of temporal disaster and go down into the common grave. The nations who oppress them must be given over to destruction. The unseen powers of evil, who seduce men to worship them as "gods," but who are only "devils," the instigators of this reign of discord and misery, must be tracked to their fastnesses in this system of creation and punished. The earth must be baptized with fire. The prince of all these enemies must be cast out. And death, the last enemy, must be destroyed.

If these judgments, however, were to issue in the final and total extinction of Israel and of mankind, God would be defeated and the enemy would triumph. Hence the Song casts a horoscope to see "what their end shall be." Man's extremity proves to be God's opportunity. "I was brought low and he helped me." Not even death can defeat the least of God's gracious purposes toward His people or annul His design in the creation of man and the world. The secret of relief and of victory is all contained in the fact that He is the Living One, the Lord

of both death and life. After the fullest vindication of His righteousness, after punishment has done its worst, and death and hell seem to be complete masters of the field, then the way is only the more clear for the God of grace and resurrection to work.

In His wonder-working counsels Redemption through death and resurrection is provided; and all God's enemies are overthrown. Even Death itself is vanquished and destroyed. And so all mankind, who have been shut up in this bondage to sin and death, share in the benefits of this deliverance and are summoned to rejoice because of it.

It remains for us now to see how these principles give tone to all subsequent Psalm and Prophecy.

That Israel, the nations who oppressed them, and all the Gentiles must suffer for their sins such wrath from God as should fully vindicate His righteousness is the plainest fact of Scripture. No Bible reader will require us to prove this by quotations. It is found on every page. The prophets all denounce Israel and foretell his coming desolation. But their prophetic glance takes in also the nations with which Israel had been in any way associated. It includes, indeed, within its horizon, all mankind. After the burden of Israel is declared we have, as in Isaiah,the burden of Babylon,of Moab,of Damascus, of Egypt, of Ethiopia, of Arabia, of Tyre, and finally of the whole earth, (ch. xxiv.) which is made empty and desolate, because it is "defiled under its inhabitants, and the transgression thereof is heavy upon it." These judgments would reach them through all the channels by which the curses of God find out evil doers, and which

Moses had vividly set forth in his farewell address (Deut. xxviii.) Sickness, mildew and drought, famine, war, desolation of home and fields, slaughter, cruel exactions and tortures by triumphant enemies, captivity in distant lands, these were the scourges to be inflicted upon them beneath the rod of God's anger.

But these woes are only the handmaids of a worse evil. They are the avenues of death. And hence the final culminating evil they must suffer under would be a long captivity in the realms of death. Their individual, their national hopes would be buried here. "Thou has visited and destroyed them and made all their memory to perish." (Is. xxvi. 14.)

Here it is to be observed that death, bondage in Sheol, is viewed in the Old Testament as a final vindication of Jehovah's righteousness, the supreme expression of His anger against sin. This was the original sentence. "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." "The wages of sin is death."

The idea attached to this term "death" in the Old Testament was the one which properly belongs to it. It was "cessation of being." Some passages seem to view this end of being as absolute. For instance, Job says (xiv. 10-12) "Man dieth and wasteth away; yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he? As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up: so man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep." In Jeremiah (li. 39.) death is viewed as a "perpetual sleep. And yet the hope of a future reawakening is often expressed. Even Job, in connection with the

above passage, affirms his belief (vs. 15) that in the end, "Thou shalt call and I will answer thee: thou wilt have a desire to the work of thy hands."

But, before resurrection, the dead, in the Hebrew conception, were not men who had passed into another form of being. They were *dead*; not absolutely extinct; otherwise they could not be resurrected. But their being was only "the miserable consciousness of not being." Doubtless in their later Scriptures, and as the result of their religious development, they advanced to a more definite conviction of the conscious happiness of the righteous in Hades, and of the conscious misery of the wicked. But still the shades, (Rephaim)* were viewed as prisioners in Sheol, without the proper prerogatives of being. The Hebrews never conceived of man as properly existent apart from the body. The body was an essential constituent in that form of being called "man." It was not, therefore, judgment *after* death that men were taught to fear, but judgment *in* death. Man, in Sheol, was but a powerless shade, an exile, a captive in the darkness and silence of that gloomy realm. There, they *rest together as prisoners*, Job iii. 18. They go down *to the bars of the pit* [Sheol] (xvii. 16.) *Prisoners of the earth*, Lam. iii. 34. They are *hid in prison houses*, Is. xlii. 22, given up for a spoil by Jehovah for their sins, (vs. 24.)

In Isaiah (xxii. 14) it is affirmed that no temporal disasters would suffice to purge the Jews of their iniquity. *Surely this iniquity shall not be purged from you till ye die, saith the Lord of hosts.*

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* See Gesenius upon this word, and also its use in Isaiah xiv. 9; xxvi. 14, 19. Psalm lxxxviii. 10, *et. al.*

The complaints of Israel (Psalm cxli. 7; Ezek. xxxvii. 11.) under the ravages of death show that they viewed the great enemy as the destroyer of all their individual and national hopes. "Our bones are scattered at the grave's mouth." "Our bones are dried, our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts." While, as regards the heathen, their kings and captains, in all their pomp and pride, with their multitudinous hosts, are viewed as brought down to hell and shut up there as in a prison house. Isaiah xiv. depicts the descent of the proud monarch of Babylon from his pinnacle of earthly glory down to Sheol, whose inhabitants are stirred up to meet and to mock this great one of the earth, now become as weak and nerveless as one of themselves. In Ezekiél xxxii. we have a similar picture of the casting down of "the multitude of Egypt," "into the nether parts of the earth, with them that go down into the pit." "Asshur (Assyria) is there, and all her company: his graves are about him: all of them slain, fallen by the sword: whose graves are set in the sides of the pit, and her company is round about her grave, all of them slain, fallen by the sword, which caused terror in the land of the living." The same dirge is repeated concerning Elam, Meshech, Tubal, Edom, the princes of the north and all the Zidonians. All these uncircumcised nations were "gone down to hell" where they would be companions of Pharaoh and his multitude, denizens with them of that land of gloom and forgetfulness, fast locked in the embrace of death.

We thus find that one uniform conception of the divine judgments against sin is current through the Old Testament. Sinners, whether viewed as individuals or in

masses as nations, were to be visited with all kinds of temporal evils in their persons, their families, their property, their civil liberties, until finally death should carry them away as captives into his dark realm. The final result of the divine dealing with sinners is stated in such passages as these: "The wicked shall be turned into hell, * (Sheol) and all the nations that forget God," (Psalm ix. 17.). "For lo, thine enemies, O Lord, for lo, thine enemies shall perish." (xcii. 9). We shall see, however, as we advance, that not even this dark realm of judgment is beyond the reach of His redeeming power.

MISCELLANEOUS TOPICS.

WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?

The word means *good news*. It is the glad tidings to men, enslaved by sin, and adjudged to death on account of sin,

1. That the Son of God has united Himself with man, taking upon Him our nature; that He has carried that nature triumphantly through all its possible temptations and through death. And this victory He won for humanity. His death was a great public transaction, having the same relation to mankind in procuring life for all, as the sin of Adam in procuring the death of all. The gospel, then, is glad tidings to the human race, sentenced to death, that life has been won back for all by our

* No student of Scripture needs to be told that "hell" in such passages is not viewed as a place of final torment, but as the realm of the dead. See "Excursus on Hades," by Dr. Craven, in Lange's Com. on the Revelation, pp. 364-378.

Elder Brother, who took upon Him the first-born's right and duty of redemption. It brings with it, therefore, the "hope toward God" that all shall be raised from the dead.

2. But life redeemed for man would not, of itself, be a blessing unless that life be cleansed from the sin which debased it and wrought its destruction. Hence the gospel proclaims also that this Redeemer is also our Saviour from sin. In the fountain of His blood, that is in the depths of His own self-surrender of life to redeem this human life of ours, He cleansed that life from sin, and brought it out upon the other side of death free and immortal. And through faith in Him, bringing us into sympathy with His death unto sin and His new life unto God, we die out of the old life of sin and are made new creatures in Him. The gospel, then, on the ground of this redemption, proclaims to men God's forgiveness of the sins that are past. It testifies of the redemption procured for us "by His blood, even the forgiveness of sins." And it proclaims Him, in the power of His resurrection, as our Saviour from sin.

3. Still another aspect of the gospel arising out of this work wrought for us and in us by Jesus is, that it is the gift from God to men of an eternal life. Life redeemed and resurrected is not necessarily eternal. But life purified and renewed after the image of Christ, and by the power of His indwelling life, is made eternal. The gospel proclaims the risen Jesus, as the source of this eternal life to all who receive Him. To such does He give power to become the sons of God. He is lifted up that whosoever believeth on Him might not perish but have eternal life. And this life is a present as well as a future blessing.

4. This leads us to observe still another aspect of the gospel. It brings to men a present deliverance from death. Not from death as to the old nature. The flesh must see corruption. But the reception of Christ, through the gospel, transfers a man at once from the state of death to that of life. "He passes from death unto life." He is quickened with Christ. "He shall never die." Death never can make a captive of him. All other men must go down into this gloomy bondage. They must await in that dark prison-house the time when all, in their own order, shall hear the voice of the Son of God and come forth. But to the Christian the word is "All things are yours, whether life or death." "Neither life nor death can separate him from the love of God." "To die is gain." "Out-homed from the body, he is at home with the Lord." (2 Cor. v: 8.)

5. Still again the gospel proclaims freedom from condemnation, or judgment, to all who accept the judgment rendered against them as men in the flesh at Christ's cross, and who receive Him as their righteousness. Jesus is now exalted to be the Judge of the living and the dead. And while, on the one hand, he dispenses eternal life to those who submit to Him, on the other He lets loose the eternal fire of God's anger against all who refuse to obey Him. But as the Christian may now enter into eternal life, so he may now escape judgment. The throne of Messiah's judgment becomes to him a throne of blessing. And the attendant angels, which visit His wrath upon the ungodly, become ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation.

These then are a part of the blessings of which the

gospel brings glad tidings to men, and which it urges upon their immediate acceptance. Its message is thus condensed—" Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." While the consequence of rejection is that one must continue " condemned " and under the abiding wrath of God. " He that believeth not is condemned already." He " shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him."

FINALITY OF THE GOSPEL OFFERS.

The prevalent view of the utter hopelessness with which the future of the vast multitudes who die in their sins is shrouded, arises partly from the fact that the gospel offers have so much the aspect of finality. They set before men alternatives which appear final. Life or death, salvation or destruction, to perish or to have eternal life, these are the terms in which its offers are conveyed, and this the doom from which it provides escape.

And yet the death threatened cannot be final and total. Otherwise there could be no resurrection.

There is a real difficulty here which must be candidly met.

1. The Scriptures at the outset give one notable instance of such an alternative, which yet did not exclude a subsequent, gracious interference. Adam's life was conditioned upon obedience. " In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." These terms were perfectly plain and final. Not a word was said to him about a future possible recovery. He forfeited the life which God had given him. Upon the face of the terms the

loss was irretrievable, the doom final. And the sentence was literally executed. But, losing his life in the form in which it was at first bestowed, provision was made by which life might be restored to him in a higher form. The road through labor and sorrow to death must be trodden. And death must claim its lawful prey. There was no setting aside the penalty, no abatement in the demands of righteousness. But grace found a way for itself in and through judgment.

This notable instance, therefore, standing as it does in this place of eminence in the history of God's dealing with man, may well make us pause before we conclude that the aspects of finality in the gospel terms furnish conclusive evidence that the future of all who are not now saved by it must be one of hopeless despair.

Other illustrations of this same feature in the divine dealings might be drawn from the history of Israel. Compare for example the denunciation through Moses, (Deut. iv. 26.) "I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day that ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land whereunto ye go over Jordan to possess it," with the promise through Ezekiel (xxxvii. 12-28), to bring them out of their graves, and set them in their own land forevermore.

II. And yet that these features of finality in the gospel terms are no fiction, that they indicate an irrevocable loss and an immense danger cannot be too strongly insisted upon:

1. There is an aspect of finality in "the gospel of the kingdom." The phrase "Kingdom of Heaven" or "Kingdom of God" refers in Scripture to that heavenly

kingdom which Jesus, as the Son of Man, administers at the right hand of power in Heaven. This kingdom, however, is now opposed by a "power of darkness." (Col. i. 13.) The time of its open manifestation and triumphant overthrow of all evil, physical and moral, is yet future. A class of men are being called out from the world to take part with Jesus in His universal triumph. Many passages of Scripture present the gospel call as a call to the present sacrifice and to the future honors of this kingdom. Such an one we have, for example, in Matt. xix. 27, 28. "Then answered Peter and said unto Him, Behold, we have forsaken all and followed thee; what shall we have therefore? And Jesus said unto them, Verily, I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." This aspect of the gospel offer is a frequent one in our Lord's words and in His parables. And the terms of it seem to be not only final, but so searching that, while "many are called but few are chosen." He plainly forewarns us that many who profess His name, and who imagine that their title to a place in His kingdom is beyond dispute, will be rejected from it. He will say unto them "Depart from me, I never knew you."

2. The same aspect of finality and the same searching tests characterize the gospel, viewed as a call to a place in the church, the bride of the Lamb. Here again a special selected class are brought to view. They are spoken of as "the church of the first-born, which are written in heaven," (Heb. xii. 23.) "They are the first

fruits unto God and the Lamb," (Rev. xiv. 1-5). They are the first who attain to full victory over death, (Phil. iii. 11; Rev. xx. 5, 6).

Here, as in "the gospel of the kingdom," there are honors and rewards for those who now come into full fellowship with Christ in His sufferings, and in His death unto sin, which, if once lost, are lost forever.

3. The offer of eternal life, with the uncounted treasures of blessing this gift implies, has about it also an aspect of finality. It is indeed a broader gift than that of the special honors of the kingdom we have been considering. For all the saved are made partakers of it. Although in some this Christ-life is yet a babe. It is also less limited by time-conditions than the special rewards now offered to the "called and chosen and faithful," (Rev. xvii. 14). For it is a present gift. Believers now have it, (1 John v. 12, 13). But the conditions upon which it is bestowed are final in the sense that they are perfectly fixed and unalterable. There must be that faith in Christ which makes us one with Him in His death unto sin, and His life unto God. But while these terms are final, it does not follow that the present opportunities, to all classes and conditions of mankind, are the only ones. Myriads of men have died in ignorance of these terms. Those who die in infancy are incapable of moral action under them. And yet to all who now hear the gospel it comes with this aspect of finality. With some the opportunity of choice may be given under such circumstances of spiritual light that their present rejection will be final, having no forgiveness, "neither in this world, nor in the world to come." And all indeed who hear the gospel,

and who do not come to Christ that they might have life, suffer a definite and irretrievable loss. They fail *now* of eternal life. They must go down to death destitute of its supporting and delivering power. They are slain in this life-battle. They lose their crown. They die out of manhood and out of that boundless heritage of blessing secured for it by the Son of Man. They never, through faith in Him, passed from death unto life. And so death remains their portion, until, in the far distant future, among the captives in its prison-house they hear His voice and come forth. And even then they do not awake to "the resurrection of life." They come back to life still under condemnation, the question of their eternal life undetermined, and subject to the hazards of that final judgment which, for some, ends in a second death.

We thus discover that, in order to take in the whole of Scripture teaching on this subject, we must discriminate between the various aspects of blessing the gospel presents to men. With respect to the rewards of the kingdom, and a place in the number of those who now suffer with Christ and shall hereafter reign with Him, the gospel call is final. It pertains to this life, and to this present world. But those aspects of the gospel call which deal with the fundamental question of life or death are not so limited by time-conditions. The failure to enter into life now involves indeed fearful loss in this present time and bitter bondage in the realms of death hereafter. The unsaved must go down to hell. There is no escape for them from that doom. Their loss and punishment in this respect is final and irrevocable. But death and hell cannot forever hold their victims.

While, therefore, in this trial for life there is under the gospel, as in the case of Adam, fixed terms, an irreversible sentence and a mortal punishment, yet this finality is not of such a character as to preclude other operations of God's power, after the execution of His sentence, by which the way of judgment may become a way of redeeming grace. We know that death must yield up its captives to man's Redeemer.

We have sufficiently explained that this gift of restored life is not eternal life. It does not insure salvation. In the case of some it may seal condemnation. But it does imply that God's ways of grace toward man are not merely for a season, or limited to one age. Nor do the demands of His righteousness change.

Of one thing we may be sure. In this world and in all worlds, the path of righteousness and of complete self-surrender to the will of God is the only path of life. While wrong doing and rejection of Him, who is the Lord our righteousness is, in this world and in all worlds, eternally the way of sorrow and of death.

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST.

A recent sermon, preached in Chicago by Bishop Fallows, of the Reformed Episcopal Church, was widely noticed in the daily papers. There was nothing in his delineation of the Signs of the Times different from that which many others have drawn. We have before pointed to the same events and the same features in the present aspect of the world as indicating that a great crisis in its history is approaching. He spoke, however, of the

widespread indifference to this subject, and of how the expectation of Christ's second coming never enters into the schemes and forecasts of the great mass of intelligent men. And, indeed, it has largely faded out from the minds of the majority of Christians.

It seems to us to be a most useful inquiry to seek out a reason for this. We can understand, of course, why the wise men of the world do not look for His appearing. While, to the multitudes who make a god of money or of pleasure, no topic could be more uncongenial. But why is it that so many Christians, some of them devoted ones, dislike this subject? Why does the thought of Christ's return fill them with an undefined dread? We have known Christians, whose character as such was undoubted, whose love for Christ was sincere, who could not think of His coming without such dread. Although praying daily "Thy kingdom come," although believing themselves to belong to that chosen flock, the bride of Christ, whose constant attitude should be that of waiting, and whose daily prayer should be, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus," yet this prayer hardly ever rose to their lips. And as for living on until that day, they did not hesitate to say that they would much prefer to die before the outburst of these tremendous scenes.

Just here we may discover one of the strongest reasons why this hope finds no place in their hearts. Among all the false teaching to which they have been subjected and the wrong ideas they have formed, this, perhaps, is the most responsible for their unhappy fears. They have been taught to conceive of our Lord's kingdom, with the portents and tribulations that precede its advent, and

the wrathful judgments that accompany its manifestation, as all condensed and poured out in one great catastrophe of the future. They are stunned and terrorized at the prospect of armies of angels, and the trumpet-blast that arouses even the sleepers in their graves, and the flaming fire, and the quaking earth, and the horror-stricken throngs and the awful judgment seat.

We have no desire to belittle in any mind the great realities of Christ's kingly rule and judgment which lie behind these chosen scriptural symbols. And yet we shall greatly mistake if we view them as other than symbols. And we shall fall into a still worse mistake, if we suppose that these terrific tokens pertain wholly to our Lord's future reign and judgment, and not at all to His present kingdom. Here is found the chief cause why even good Christians have so little real love for His appearing. They associate it with so much that is terrible. True, the called and faithful are promised an escape from these terrors that fall upon a guilty world and a formal church. But still, awful terror is the main feature of the event, as it appears to their minds.

Now the great corrective of this wrong conception is found in giving up the quibbles by which we have all along explained away the Lord's words, used in connection with the most awe-inspiring descriptions of His coming. To His disciples He repeatedly said that these administrations of His kingly and judicial power would begin before some of them had tasted death, and before that generation had passed away.

His word to the high priest and the council was, "*Henceforth* shall ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on

the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven." (Matt. xxvi. 64, R. V.)

We are aware that these words look far beyond the destruction of Jerusalem or the events that brought about the downfall of the Jewish state. They cover, with their wide glance, all the events of the world's later history. They especially contemplate the great events that shall wind up this present age. But the terrors they bring to view are not all to be enacted then. The vision groups a world-wide sweep of judgments in one picture. And the events of the last days will not be different in character, only in intensity, from those that have always been happening in the world's history. And the mighty attendant angels will not differ from the heavenly powers which now carry on the operations of this created system. The powers of *Nature* are always viewed in Scripture as the angels of His might.

If we would, therefore, learn to appreciate Christ's presence in the affairs of the world *now*, we would dread it less in the future. If we could better appreciate His present faithful ways of judging and ruling us, we would dread them less hereafter. The truth is Christ is now present, judging the world in righteousness; only His presence is concealed behind these clouds. "A vail is spread over all nations." His presence is to be manifested, His glory is to be "revealed." But it could not be manifested unless it were already near, but hidden. His apocalypse is a disclosure. That is the meaning of the Word. We are not to conceive of Christ's coming as a sudden descent of flaming glory from a far-off region, with a tremendous escort of

angels from the distant realms of the universe. This conception implies that He is not here now, that His Spirit is only an ambassador from a distant heaven. It implies that His angels are strange visitants from another sphere. Whereas, if our eyes were opened, we should see, as did Elisha's servant, that the whole realm of nature is alive with their ministries of God's mercy to His children, and of His wrath to evil-doers.

The coming of Christ will be an unveiling of great realities now existing, and to which we, poor men, are blind. It must indeed be a tremendous crisis, but it will also be a revelation of fullness of life and blessedness to them that wait for it. It must bring birth-pangs to the nations and to the groaning creature. But even to them it will be a deliverance. And, hence, we will do well to place alongside of those passages of Scripture which set forth its terrors, the many passages which call upon the righteous to exult in view of it, (*e. g.* Ps. cxlix.) which summon the nations to be glad, (Ps. lxvii ; Is. xxv. 6-9,) and which invite even the inanimate creation to take part in the universal joy, (Ps. xcvi-xcviii).

All that we have said, however, would be incomplete were we not to add this final word. Any Christian who loves not his Lord's appearing may be certain that there is a cause which lies deeper than these wrong or partial conceptions. If the heart were wholly surrendered to Him, if there were a deeper experience of His tender searching ways of judgment, by which the righteous fire of His love, and the loving fire of His righteousness, must consume all that is evil in us in order that He may present us "faultless before the presence of His glory

with exceeding joy," this consciousness of being now in His hands of judgment would take away the dread of it in the future. And if there were more present fidelity in His service there would be more of that present joy with which Paul greeted that day, when he said, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing."

THE PRESENT CHRIST.

There has been a marked tendency of late among thoughtful Christians to regard the presence of Christ in the affairs of the world as not only a promise of the future, but a reality of the present. A recent lecture by Joseph Cook is upon this theme, "The Holy Spirit a present Christ." Dr. Warren in his work on the "Parousia" magnifies this view of Christ as now the King and Judge of the world to the depreciation, we think, of that aspect of Scripture teaching concerning His kingdom which represents it as future. But still there is most important truth in this view of Christ's spiritual presence and administration. Any one who has read such a book as that of Dr. R. S. Storrs upon the "Historical Effects of Christianity" must be convinced that the dominion over the earth promised to the Son of Man is not wholly a thing of the future. It is the deepest reality of the present. The whole course of the world since His ascension proves that He is now judging it in righteousness and subduing it to His control.

Christianity suffers loss and its moral power is diminished by any view of our Lord's kingly and judicial work which undervalues it in the present and reserves all the stress of it for some great crisis and era of the future. Even the moral restraints of punishment are weakened when men view it as something to be feared in a future life, but from which they may hope to escape in this life. The judgment seat of Christ would be more feared, if men were brought to realize that they are now in the hands of the living God, and that all events and circumstances, all the laws of life and forces of nature are but fingers on His hands, instruments of His mercy and His wrath. Hence it is important to any proper understanding of our Lord's teaching concerning His throne of rule and judgment, that we should not explain away the obvious intent of His repeated sayings that some of that generation should witness His power and coming. Not all, but some. Only those who were enlightened by His Spirit could see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom in the great events that followed His session at the right hand of power. And so it is still. Worldly men are still blind to that presence which is sunlight in the hearts of Jesus' disciples and which explains to them the complications and the catastrophes of the world's history, and opens before them a path of light through all present darkness.

And this leads us to observe the mistake into which many of this class of observers fall in this their estimate of the present reign of Christ. They are right so far as they go. But they are apt to overlook other features of Christ's reign to which Scripture testifies and which the

facts of the world confirm. These are that the reign of Christ is still disputed and, from the eyes of men, concealed.

There is a tremendous "power of the enemy" still asserting itself against His rightful sovereignty. This baleful power finds lodgement in the hearts and bodies of men. It is intrenched in the constitution of this physical system. Even the powers of nature are forced into its service. From this point of view Scripture constantly represents the kingdom of Christ as a triumph of the future. It speaks of a time when Satan shall be bound, when his captives shall be loosed, when men, in soul and body, shall be freed from his debasements, when the creature shall be liberated from its bondage to corruption. These results are something more than spiritual triumphs. And they predict and require a special and critical putting forth of power from the ascended Christ, which Scripture defines as the taking to himself His great power and entering *manifestly* upon His kingdom.

While therefore, on the one hand, the advocates of the future personal reign of Christ over the Earth have fallen into the mistake of depreciating the fact of his present reign, and while Christians generally have been taught to look forward to a future judgment to the partial obscuration of the signs of His present judgment, on the other hand the majority have failed to see that the promises and plans of Christ's kingdom require the *open* and triumphant manifestation of it, to the overthrow of all the evil powers that oppose it, even from their fastnesses in this present natural system, and to the everlasting honor of those who now suffer and wait for it.

NOTES ON CURRENT OPINIONS AND EVENTS.

ANGLO-ISRAEL.—A friend has sent us a number of pamphlets bearing upon this question. The subject is not new to us. And yet we confess we have not given it thorough examination. Our investigation up to this point leads us toward these two conclusions:

1. The theory that the Anglo-Saxon and kindred races are the lineal descendants of the lost tribes of Israel breaks down for want of proof, if by descent is meant such race identity as exists between the modern Jews and the tribe of Judah. There is no evidence that the continuity of the Ten Tribes has been so preserved, or that they were not amalgamated with and absorbed by surrounding nations. To the objection that this is inconsistent with the promise of God to preserve and restore them, we reply that, for all we know to the contrary, the race-life of a people may be preserved even when the stream of it becomes mingled with that of other races, and its identity can be no longer traced. We know but little of the secret laws of life and its transmission. Even the lines of Jewish descent were often strangely crossed with Gentile blood, and yet the Jewish type of life remained. Two Gentile women, Rahab and Ruth, were given a place in the line of the ancestry of David and of our Lord. And yet He was none the less of the seed of Abraham. Still further, the purpose to restore Israel seems in Ezek. xxxvii. to reach over into post-resurrection times and to embrace that portion of the nation who are literally *buried*. The promise, therefore, may be fulfilled either in an emergence of the Israel-type of life from the stream of nations into which it has flown, or in a resurrection of Israel's dead, or in both these ways.

2. If, therefore, the theory only requires us to believe that the currents of Israel's race life became mingled with the blood of the elementary Teutonic races, and especially the Saxon, contributing to it characteristic elements of strength and of progress, becoming a predominant feature in the development of the British people, just as the Anglo-Saxon element is the moulding power among the races that occupy the American continent, then the theory may be true. Certainly these writers make a strong point when they tell us that the British Empire is fulfilling that destiny in these latter days which Scripture plainly assigns to *Israel*, as distinct from Judah.

But beyond this possible blood-relationship there is a spiritual kinship which puts the Anglo-Saxon races in the line of Israel's inheritance. They worship the God of Israel. They acknowledge Israel's Messiah. They confess that the Lord God hath given unto Him the throne of His father, David. Many of them have learned to wait for Him from heaven.

Just here another thought occurs to us. St. Paul distinguishes between "the Jews, the Gentiles and the Church of God," (1 Cor. x. 32.) The calling, the destiny and the heritage of the Church differ from that of "Israel." In Christ there is neither Jew nor Gentile. The body of Christ is a chosen company now being gathered out from all nations for a special purpose. Before Israel of the earthly seed there seems to be a promised earthly destiny. The Church, the spiritual seed, has a heavenly calling, to be fulfilled in that day when, out of the opened heavens, the earth shall receive of the fullness of God's bounty. While, therefore, we do not doubt tnat there are surprising proofs of God's fidelity to His covenant promises yet to break in upon the world, we would not forget that the relation of the Christian to God is one of far deeper import and more endearing than is contemplated in these ancient promises. "For our citizenship is in heaven."

A clergyman in the Episcopal church sends us an article on "the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion," taken from one of Bishop Thirlwall's charges, which he believes is a real "Word of Reconciliation" among the conflicting views of that ordinance which now prevail in the church. It is a sad thought to one who loves the Church and prays for its unity that the very ordinance which the Lord instituted as the sign and seal of our union in life with Him, and with one another, has become so largely a wall of separation. We recite the creed, "We believe in the Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of saints," and yet how far are we from living up to it. We fully recognize the importance and the need of reconciling words at this point. It lies near to the heart of the object we have in view in this magazine. We hope soon to publish this article in whole or in part. And, meanwhile, for ourselves and for all our brethren, we pray that God would give us light upon this important theme.

ARCHDEACON FARRAR ON FUTURE RETRIBUTION.—The March number of the *North American Review* contains an article with this title from the pen of this gifted writer. It vindicates the right of those who cherish the "larger hope" to be heard within the limits of the Catholic faith and of a reverent use of Holy Scripture. It recalls what he has set forth in his publications concerning the crude and cruel misrepresentations of the Divine dealings which have so long prevailed, and of their unworthiness as a basis for any true ethical or spiritual culture.

We discover, however, the same defect which we have elsewhere spoken of as a feature in the author's books upon this subject. He fails to give us a full Scriptural warrant for this hope. He does not grasp the full meaning of the doctrine of the resurrection, nor clearly perceive that the key to the dark problems he discusses, and for some of which he offers no solution, lies in this "hope toward God that there shall be a resurrection both of the just and of the unjust."

The point he makes against those who obtain their relief from the dark picture of an eternal torment for a large porportion of the race by ascribing a kind of sacramental efficacy to death is a strong one. Joseph Cook, it will be remembered, in his zeal against the admission of any possible opportunity for any class of sinners after death, pushes this idea of an opportunity for final choice *in* death to an extreme which has been absuredly defined as "probation after breath." We are not disposed to deny that there is a powerfully corrective discipline in mortal sickness. But we fail to see that it is any less dangerous to encourage people in the idea that such opportunity may come with death than in that it may come after it. Waiting for repentance on a death-bed is no better for purposes of present reformation than waiting for repentance after it.

The first may be the most delusive, as it leads a sinner to undervalue the necess ty of holiness, and to rely upon some magical change at the last hour to fit him for heaven. Whereas, the other holds out no hope of such fitness, at least until the sin has been burned out of a man in the consuming fire of God's wrath against it.

A UNITARIAN CONFESSION OF FAITH.—It is a pleasant thing to discover that there may be more of truth held by Christians outside the pale of orthodoxy than we have given them credit for. The building of the First Unitarian Church of Philadelphia, erected in 1821, has been recently demolished and in its corner stone was found the following inscription, written on parchment:

"This house we appropriate to the honour and sole worship of the High and Lofty One who inhabiteth eternity; the Blessed and Only Potentate, whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain; who dwelling not in temples made with hands but in unapproachable light, is not worshipped by men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he giveth unto all life and breath, and all things: This is that One God, beside whom there is no other; and who, being rich in mercy, for the great love wherewith he loved the fallen race of mankind, hath sent them the message of grace, truth and salvation by his beloved and chosen Son, Jesus of Nazareth, whom by an anointing with the Holy Spirit and with power He hath constituted the Messiah, the Christ, the one Mediator between God and man, and in whose resurrection and exaltation He hath given assurance unto all men that He will by him judge the world in righteousness. *Deo. Optimo Maximo. In sæcula sæculorum Gloria.*"

ENCOURAGEMENT.—A brother minister of the Presbyterian Church, of whose success in his work we have often heard, and whose aims in it we know to be high and noble, sends with his subscription these cheering words:

"DEAR BROTHER:—I had intended to acknowlege before this the receipt of the February number of your new magazine, WORDS OF RECONCILIATION. I was very glad to see it, not having observed any notices of its publication, and I was especially pleased with its contents.

"When I read that article of Dr. Shedd's in the *North American Review* I wondered whether its conclusions were to go unchallenged by the Presbyterian church; for I am convinced that the merciless logic of this class of writers is sowing the dragon's teeth from which the champions of infidelity are constantly springing up. And so long as such views are permitted to stand without dispute, as the accepted teaching of the church, so long shall we be nursing in the very bosom of the church itself that unbelief against which we are all the while contending. It is so disagreeable to call in question these currently accepted doctrines, that the temptation to maintain silence is peculiarly strong. For this reason our reli-

gious papers avoid these issues and the pulpit generally very discreetly omits a discussion of them. Add to this the prudential reserve that is often advisable, and the patience, forbearance and skill that are requisite in addressing the popular mind, so that a work of reconstruction shall not seem like a mere business of demolition, and the difficulties in the case are seen to be in some degree legitimate.

"It is only at certain times that such discussions as these are profitable from the pulpit, but when those times occur, fearlessly and judiciously should the work be done. In the meantime your plan of addressing the ministry and intelligent laymen through the printed page is the best. Thus the people will eventually be reached and the stumbling-blocks to faith be taken away.

"I send you my hearty 'God-speed' in the work which you have undertaken. Its method of fresh and independent Scripture study is the true, and the only true one; and its spirit and tone are admirable. Many will look askance at your little magazine and it will very likely stir up some outburst of the *odium theologicum*; but the rising star of a better, stronger, sweeter faith will ever guide and cheer you."

This letter recognizes fully the necessity for such a work as we have undertaken. We heartily sympathize with its suggestions as to the spirit and methods in which it should be carried on. We have no ambition or desire to do a work of demolition. If we are anxious that the church should break the fetters which have bound her to certain traditional interpretations which draw a mask over the face of God, and misrepresent His character and Word to men, it is that thereby she may lengthen her cords and strengthen her stakes. We believe our desire to serve our own chnrch, and the church at large, and our fellow-men in the gospel of the grace of God, was never before so earnest and sincere. But, because we love this church and the whole church, we are constrained to urge her to reconsider her formal statements concerning human destiny. We believe, in all sincerity, that she has made a most serious mistake in assuming that our Lord's words on this dark subject were spoken irrespective of what the Old Testament prophets had taught of a future redemption of all mankind from death, and of the blessing involved in this hope. And so the very resurrection which God has provided as a gracious interruption of the death punishment which forever follows sin has, from a "hope," been changed into the utter darkness of an endless torment and despair.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

A correspondent writes from Canada :

" It has been my privilege to read your first two issues, and I find that in both you refer to Isaiah xxxiii : 14-17, as teaching that the righteous are the class of persons who shall 'dwell with everlasting burnings.' This is surprising, inasmuch as the passage not only does not say so, but, on the contrary, positively declares that the righteous shall 'dwell on high,' thus rendering it obvious to every ordinary reader that they will escape the doom of the sinners in Zion."

This extract reveals a surprising misconception of our meaning. In our first number we refered to the use of this passage in the liturgy of the Bessarabian Jews as implying that while these burnings will be a "devouring fire" to the wicked, the righteous will safely pass through them. They will "survive the ordeal of those judgments by which our God, who is a consuming fire, shall search and purge all things."

These were the words used. And we cannot see that there is any essential difference between our correspondent's view of the effect of this trial upon the righteous, and our own. He says they will "escape" the trial. We say they "will safely pass through it."

There may be, however, a fundamental difference in the way in which we each conceive of the " everlasting burnings." He seems to regard this phrase as denoting a place to which the wicked are consigned for everlasting punishment. This use of it is foreign to Old Testament usage. It denotes here primarily, the fearful judgments which God sends upon nations, of which the recent destruction of the Assyrian host was an instance. It seems to look beyond these, however, to that great day of fire, " the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men," to which St. Peter refers, (2d Epistle, iii : 7-10). But the devouring fires referred to can not be the permanent abode of anybody. They are necessarily *destructive* to the ungodly, while the righteous have an abiding life and so dwell securely in the day of the Lord's anger.

It is worthy of note that the Hebrew word *gur*, translated "dwell" in the 14th vs. means "to dwell for a time," (see Gesenius) while the word *shakan*, of the 16th, carries with it the idea of settled abode.

We may add that, upon inquiring of a learned Jew his view of this passage, we found it to be the same as we have here given.

A correspondent maintains that the views we have set forth, implying that some fail of forgiveness in the world to come, and that Scripture, in drawing a veil over the future of those who suffer the second death, gives us no warrant for the hope that such will finally be saved, are inconsistent with the motto-text on our title page. All the reply we can make to this we have already given in the first article of our March number. The words "By Him to reconcile all things unto Himself" cannot be so pressed as to annul the meaning of our Saviour's words that there is a sin which "hath never forgiveness," nor warrant us in believing that there will be a resurrection out of the second death. And yet, whether the fate of the victims of this death be destruction, or eternal exclusion from the presence of the Lord, in either case the end may be a reconciliation of all things unto God. That which is destroyed is forever removed from the sphere of "all things." That which is fixed in the place of banishment and privation may yet be reconciled. Universalism assumes that God is obliged, in justice to Himself, and in love to man, to bring all men to eternal life and blessedness. This goes beyond Scripture, which teaches that God has endowed man with a self-determining power toward good or evil. All that is required by the character of God is that He shall give to His creature the best opportunities for the exercise of his moral freedom, and for reaping the benefits of his discipline under this system in which evil has a place. His provision to recover all men from the death brought upon the race by the sin of the first man insures to all such a trial, and the best results for all under it. But man's freedom under this trial must abide, as an element in his true manhood. That some remain incorrigible under it seems to be implied in the Scripture teaching as to the second death. And that some may so harden themselves against His Spirit as to fix their doom before the bounds of the first death are passed, is implied in Jesus' words about the sin which hath never forgiveness.

EVEN now, after eighteen centuries of Christianity, we may be involved in some tremendous error, of which the Christianity of the future will make us ashamed.—*Alex. Vinet.*